

# Growing Child Care Capacity in Tennessee



## *Community Child Care Hub Grants Application Guide*

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### *Community Child Care Hub Grants*

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) is seeking to invest Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to grow child care capacity in Tennessee. TDHS seeks to pilot partnerships with public/government and non-profit organizations to develop and establish locally managed child care administrative hubs that will support a network of newly licensed child care locations, in order to generate additional licensed capacity and lessen administrative burden, particularly in low-income communities and for historically underserved populations. The following guide provides additional detail and instructions for those interested in partnering with TDHS to deliver these services.

## About the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS)

**Our Mission:** To build strong families by connecting Tennesseans to employment, education, and support services.

**Our Vision:** To revolutionize the customer experience through innovation and a seamless network of services.

### **Our Core Values:**

- High Performance
- Collaboration
- Continuous Improvement
- A Shared Vision
- Customer-Centered Solutions

Led by a governor-appointed Commissioner and organized into multiple customer-facing and support divisions, the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) aims to build transformative bridges in the lives of Tennesseans. We're here to ensure that all state residents have an opportunity to reach their full potential as contributing members of our community. We achieve this goal by offering an extensive range of economic, social, and developmental services to a diverse group of almost two million Tennesseans in 95 rural and urban counties. Our broad range of customers includes custodial and non-custodial parents who participate in the Child Support Program, as well as the childcare providers who may apply for licensure through TDHS. We also serve members of our community who have disabilities or are classified as blind, visually impaired, deaf, and hard of hearing. Other customers include families living below the poverty line who may need assistance in

obtaining food resources, cash assistance, employment and training, or other resources to move beyond their current circumstances. We serve these groups and more, however our mission is always the same: build strong families by connecting Tennesseans to employment, education, and support services.

## Driving Success – Services and Outcomes

The Department seeks to pilot family and community focused solutions that demonstrate measurable impacts designed to increase the availability of affordable child care that is safe, healthy, and educationally rich.

The primary **Services** to be provided are:

1. A comprehensive menu of administrative supports to facilitate the opening of new licensed child care capacity in areas identified as child care deserts (ex. staffing, marketing, budgeting, technology, fiscal, and curriculum development and implementation);
2. Engaging stakeholders including parents, local government agencies, private businesses, non-profit agencies, philanthropic foundations, and TDHS Child Care [Quality Partners](#) to build an understanding of local child care needs in order to design capacity that closely aligns with community and local employer needs;
3. Promoting available child care capacity through a variety of communications channels, including outreach to parents and employers; and
4. Engaging technical assistance resources to continuously improve quality.

Partners selected for the Community Child Care Hub Grants must identify specific measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely outcomes (with metrics) to be used to support the identified goal(s).

The primary **Outcomes** to be achieved are:

**Access:** Increase Licensed Capacity in Child Care Deserts and for Historically Underserved Populations

- Establish a minimum of 3 newly licensed locations receiving administrative support through the hub
- Each location must have listed strategies for and measurable success in serving historically underserved populations such as infants and toddlers, children in rural areas or low-income neighborhoods, dual language learners, children with disabilities, and children who need care during non-traditional hours
- Create a sustainable and formalized support network by engaging partners such as local governments, parents, philanthropic foundations, and businesses

**Affordability:** Lower Administrative Costs to Lessen Financial Burden on Families

- Contract to participate in the [Child Care Payment Assistance/Certificate Program](#), a state program that provides financial assistance to parents and caregivers in covering child care costs
- Demonstrate lower administrative costs relative to child care locations without shared services/hub support
- Establish tuition rates that are at or below the community average for comparable type of care
- Demonstrate a sustainable model of administrative supports that provide critical “back-office” resources that increase the economic stability of the newly licensed child care agencies, while keeping services affordable to families

**Quality:** Deliver Care that is Safe, Healthy, and Educationally Rich

- Achieve Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) scores of 80 or above
- Demonstrate care that is inclusive and appropriate to children with special needs and of diverse circumstances of race and economic status
- Demonstrate parent and community engagement to promote individual child and agency success
- Establish salary schedules for early childhood staff that are above average hourly rates for that position
- Utilize curriculum that is age-appropriate and demonstrates best practices in child development

## **Growing Child Care Capacity in TN - Community Child Care Hub Grants - Applicant Criteria**

The Department is looking to engage eligible public/government and non-profit organizations in Tennessee with evidence-based and evidence-informed program models who can administer shared services to grow child care capacity in Tennessee. The Department requires these services to be delivered in a manner that improves economic stability for child care providers and well-being for children and families, specifically with consideration of the following:

1. Provide a comprehensive menu of administrative supports to facilitate the opening of new licensed child care capacity in areas identified as child care deserts (ex. staffing, marketing, budgeting, technology, fiscal, and curriculum development and implementation);
2. Engage stakeholders including parents, local government agencies, private businesses, non-profit agencies, philanthropic foundations, and TDHS Child Care Quality Partners to build an understanding of local child care needs in order to design capacity that closely aligns with community and local employer needs;

3. Promote available child care capacity through a variety of communications channels, including outreach to parents and employers; and
4. Engage technical assistance resources to continuously improve quality.

The Department is seeking to partner with eligible public/government and non-profit organizations in Tennessee that demonstrate an understanding of the challenges child care providers face in delivering care that is accessible, affordable, and of high quality, including those related to:

- **Staffing** - establishing a strong workforce and reducing turnover
- **Income Generation** – systems and strategies that support consistent collection of tuition, including subsidy assistance
- **Managing Enrollments** – limiting instances of vacant slots in order to maximize revenue and minimize waste
  - Balancing income with expenses in order to cover per-child costs with sustained revenue

All eligible entities who wish to apply must not be currently debarred, suspended, or otherwise ineligible to conduct business in the State of Tennessee. In addition, eligible entities who wish to apply must not be contracted to participate in other TDHS-funded pilot programs to increase supply of child care. Grant Contracts with the Department may be proposed for services lasting from one to three years. Grant Contracts will be based upon the type of service needed, available resources and funding, and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

## **Growing Child Care Capacity in TN - Community Child Care Hub Grants – Application Guidelines - What Must be Included in the Application?**

### *I. Organizational Background.*

Discuss how the organization was initiated/founded. Describe the organization's history of delivering child care services and the work that the organization is currently doing in the area of child care, the population and number of children/families currently served, and outputs and outcomes that demonstrate a true impact as a result of the program or services. Provide information about the organization's management structure, including ownership and handling of administrative tasks. *Limit to 250 words or less.*

### *II. Child Care Operational Challenges to be Addressed*

State the child care challenges to be addressed, including items from the list above and other areas as identified. Provide a brief but clear overview of the program. Identify specific community child care issues to be addressed, with a specific focus on access, affordability and quality. Indicate how community involvement was obtained in identifying needs and issues to be addressed and include existing community resources that will be leveraged to support program success. Describe how the program is different from other

coordinated services already in place in the community or if these services are unique to the community to address a specific need.

### *III. Target Population.*

Describe the community (target population) to be served, including geographic area, economic status, historically underserved populations, or other defining characteristics. Define the criteria of low-income families to be served by this program. *Example: individual's income at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guidelines, receives governmental assistance, some parts of Medicaid, Section 8 low-income housing assistance, low-rent public housing, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Head Start, Child Care Payment Assistance, and/or National School Lunch Program: Free or Reduced Lunch.* Explain your marketing and outreach plan to recruit your target population to benefit from these child care services. Explain the support and partnerships you anticipate needing from TDHS, other state agencies, or organizations to reach and serve the target population.

Provide the total number of unduplicated families/children you anticipate serving each year. Breakdown the group by adults and/or children/youth.

### *IV. Statement of Work (SOW) - Proposed Community Child Care Hub Model to be Implemented.*

Explain the services and describe the specific tasks that will be performed to meet the purpose and objectives of the program. Based upon criteria listed above provide a detailed description of the program and how it will deliver those services. Specify the core components of the services being offered. Describe the human resources, program design, finance and accounting, technology, site identification and preparation, marketing, curriculum, and enrollment supports to be provided to the new locations, including the Child Care Management Software (CCMS) that will be implemented to support administrative efficiency of the child care locations. Identify the mode of delivery through which each component and element of the program will be delivered.

Describe the leadership and staffing structure for both the backbone organization and individual child care sites, including wages that will be deployed to support attraction and retention of quality child care staff at each location. Describe the curriculum and other strategies that will be used to ensure that care delivered is high quality. Identify each new child care location that will be created, including the community where it will be located and the anticipated newly licensed capacity. Describe how each child care location will be structured in order to serve historically underserved populations such as infants and toddlers, children in rural areas or low-income neighborhoods, dual language learners, children with disabilities, or children who need care during non-traditional hours. Include an implementation timeline for when administrative services will be provided and individual child care locations opened. Describe how these services will strengthen the economic stability of child care providers in the categories listed above and additional categories unique to that community. Include a plan for sustainability of the shared services after grant funds are exhausted.

List all key partnerships (paid and unpaid) and describe their role in the delivery of services to support the program. List all program services that will be subcontracted through another organization. Include how you will coordinate and facilitate the various partnerships (i.e. frequency of meetings, delivery of reports, monitoring of outcomes and financials (if paid subcontractor)). Describe how the program will engage and continuously incorporate the voices of families and local business leaders in the program. Indicate how the program will adapt, or “best practice” be used, to fit the needs and context of your community (e.g., differences in resources, cultural values, competence, and language).

*V. Performance Measures/Outcomes.*

*Outcomes should look not only at the number of families/children served by the program, but whether the program will improve the economic stability and sustainability of participating child care locations.* Based upon criteria shown above, list the outcomes you will achieve and key results. Provide outcomes that are specific, measurable with associated metrics, achievable, relevant, and timely. Include specific information about how these outcomes demonstrate an impact on child care access, affordability, and quality in the designated communities. Describe how the data will be collected (its sources), monitored, measured, and evaluated.

*VI. Detailed Proposed Budget Narrative.*

Provide the grant amount being requested for each year and the total amount for the program. Include as a supplemental document a budget breakdown for the program on the provided budget form. Include a detailed budget narrative to support the budget form for the program and each subcontracting agency, if applicable. Include private and public funding sources (pending and received). *Note: The total available funds may not necessarily be divided equally among the applicants, nor will selected applicants be guaranteed the entire amount requested.*

*VII. Organizational Structure.*

Provide an organizational chart that outlines key staff for the oversight, support, and delivery of the program. Describe the current staffing structure/model and positions needed, if any. The description should include job titles and description of roles and responsibilities of all key positions. Indicate any services that will be contracted out such as fiscal, audit, etc.

## **Growing Child Care Capacity in TN - Community Child Care Hub Grants – Application Instructions**

Eligible organizations and other qualified entities in Tennessee who can administer services that are consistent with the Department’s mission and meets the purposes of improving child care access, affordability, and quality through the delivery of shared services support

are encouraged to submit an application. The Department will not be available to assist with the actual writing of applications or critiques of drafts. Questions about the application process may be emailed to [CCMicrocenterHub.DHS@tn.gov](mailto:CCMicrocenterHub.DHS@tn.gov)

The application must be 8 pages or less and outlined to address all the statements/requirements under each header in accordance with the application guidelines above including: Organizational Background, Child Care Operational Challenges to be Addressed, Target Population, Statement of Work (SOW), Performance Measures/Outcomes, Detailed Proposed Budget Narrative, and Organizational Structure. The application pages must be numbered and submitted on 8 ½ X 11-inch paper, double spaced, 1" (2.54 cm) margins, all around, and at least 11pt. font size.

**Note:** The size and/or style of graphics are not restricted, and their use and style are at the applicant's discretion, but they will count towards the application page limit of 8 pages. Letters of support are optional and will count towards the application page limit of 8 pages. In addition to the 8-page application, the following supplemental documents are required (and do *not* count towards the application page limit of 8 pages):

- Conflict of Interest (COI) – Organization's policy (if applicable) and a signed statement on official letterhead attesting that: based upon reasonable inquiry, neither the organization, its employees, affiliate entities/agencies, employees of any affiliate entity/agency, nor any affiliated individual who will perform services under this potential contract, as a result of this application, have a possible or perceived conflict of interest.
- Organizational chart
- Provide a copy of the organization's Tennessee Department of Revenue Registration Certificate. [https://tntap.tn.gov/eservices/ /](https://tntap.tn.gov/eservices/)
- Certificate of Insurance
- FFATA Verification through sam.gov (Provide a statement of whether the Grant Applicant is actively registered with public profile access in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov- <https://sam.gov/content/home>). The public profile access shall be required to contract with the State of Tennessee. If registered, provide the SAM.gov Unique Entity Identification Number. (SAM UEI). If not yet registered, please provide a statement confirming that the Applicant will complete registration prior to Contract execution.
- Completed budget form - State form provided.

Application materials must be submitted electronically through the provided web-portal Formstack:

[https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/tdhs\\_community\\_child\\_care\\_hub\\_grants\\_application](https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/tdhs_community_child_care_hub_grants_application)

Applicants must complete all required sections in Formstack. The budget form should be submitted in Excel and all other documents must be converted to PDF format. All documents should be titled "Agency Name – Growing Child Care Capacity in TN - Community Child Care Hub Grants", followed by the type of document (Application, COI, Org Chart, Budget, or IRS Determination Letter, *if applicable*).

All documents mentioned above **must be submitted in Formstack by 5:00 p.m. Central Time on or before July 28, 2023**, to be considered. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to allow sufficient time to address all potential delays caused for any reason whatsoever including computer or technology problems.

## **Growing Child Care Capacity in TN - Community Child Care Hub Grants – Selection Criteria**

All complete applications submitted by eligible public/government and non-profit organizations and received by the deadline will be reviewed. No applicant obtains any right to a Growing Child Care Capacity in TN - Community Child Care Hub Grant based on submission of an application. The total available funds may not necessarily be divided equally among the applicants, nor will selected applicants be guaranteed the entire amount requested.

Application packets will be reviewed in three phases:

- Phase I – Required Mandatory Standards Review
- Phase II – Advisory Panel Review and Applicant Packets
- Phase III – Recommendation

In addition to evaluating application responses, the Department will also consider:

- Qualifications and experience of the organization;
- Familiarity and experience performing the services needed by the Department, and familiarity and experience creating and running programs, including the ability to perform the work in a timely manner;
- Organization's (and partnering agencies) current or former contract status and performance history with the Department or other local governmental agencies; and
- Criteria as outlined in the application guidelines